

Policy Digest April 2026

This policy digest provides links to items of interest produced by Healthwatch Northumberland partners and stakeholders and other organisations in the wider health and social care field. To help with prioritisation we have classified the items using the following key:

- 1** Important to HWN strategic aims **2** Of interest to HWN **3** Wider interest

Social Care

- 1 **Social Care:** the annual [King's Fund](#) overview of the state of social care.
- 2 **CQC assessment frameworks:** the CQC has shared draft versions of its proposed assessment frameworks for specific areas including [Adult Social Care](#)

Health

- 1 **Public perception of care:** latest report from Healthwatch England **attached**.
- 1 **General Practice:** a useful overview of [General Practice](#) including latest changes to the substantive contract.
- 2 **Patient Trust:** interesting article **attached** about 'trust' in care services and the impact of increased workloads and technology in making care more transactional than relationship based.
- 1 **Patient experience in improving General Practice:** **attached** report looking at how patient experience is used to improve quality in general practice.
- 3 **Funding healthcare:** interesting report on the comparison in performance between [insurance based](#) and taxpayer funded healthcare.

Communication and Engagement

- 1 **NENC People's Hub:** latest [edition](#) of the Hub newsletter.
- 2 **NENC ICB:** latest update from ICB [Chief Executive](#)

Northumberland

- 2 **Northumberland Recovery College:** latest update and [events](#)
- 1 **Carers Northumberland:** link to latest [updates for professionals](#).